



## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



# TIME CAPSULE AT STATE VETERANS HOME SEALED

Friday afternoon, veterans, family members, business leaders and staff gathered in the rotunda area of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home to pack and seal the time capsule.

This time capsule will serve as a historic cache of goods and information, as a mode of communication for future generations.

Items included in the time capsule included: letters, business cards, photos, brochures, newspapers, proclamations, press releases, challenge coins, letters, pins, visitor guide, historic post cards, coins, drivers license, and history of the State Veterans Home.

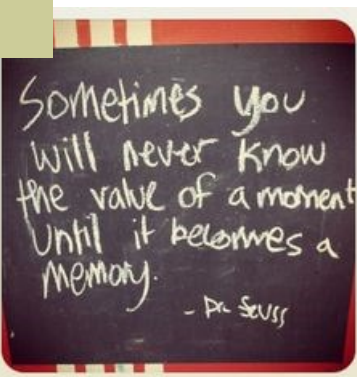
During the brief program, conducted by MJFSVH Superintendent Brad Richardson, the capsule was passed from World War II Veteran, to Korean War Veteran, to Vietnam War Veteran to OIF Veteran before being sealed in the base of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice statue.



L to R—Front row: World War II Veterans Harry Ellwein and Joe Lolley. Back row: Korean War Veterans Clarence Jerke and Darrell Custer Vietnam War Veteran Mike Ginger, and OIF Veteran Justin McClure.

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## DAVISON COUNTY GROWS OUTREACH VENTURES

Davison County continues to grow their outreach program by participating in events like the Corn Palace Rodeo Stampede Parade.

Jessica Davidson and Maria Payne from the Davison County VSO office, with the support of their families and DAV transportation driver James Schorzmann, and Veteran Cody Holzer showcased the DAV van, distributed freebies and candy and handed out brochures about the services provided by the Davison County VSO office.

The parade theme was "Dreams Come True, Under The Red White & Blue," an easy sell for this team!!!!!!



### DAVISON COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE

ARE YOU A VETERAN or  
WIDOW of a VETERAN?

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS  
ABOUT VETERANS BENEFITS?

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN  
BEING A VOLUNTEER DAV VAN  
DRIVER?

To make appointment with the  
Davison County Veterans Service Officer  
Jessica Davidson  
Call 605-995-8619  
Office Hours Mon-Fri 8-5  
1420 North Main St. Mitchell, SD



## MJFSVH VETERANS HIT THE ROAD

Kudos to the "Activity Team" at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home for all the trips they have provided for the veterans the past few weeks — shopping, picnics, trip to Mount Rushmore and the Fourth of July parade, just to name a few.

These events give our veterans an opportunity to experience South Dakota's great outdoors.



## DAV HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of South Dakota have selected Kenneth H. Lantgen Jr. as their new executive director. Lantgen is an Operation Iraqi Freedom War Veteran and served on active duty orders from 2003 to 2009 as a Combat Engineer, and also as Wounded Warrior Transition Battalion Cadre.

Lantgen will be in the office Monday - Friday 8am-5pm and encourages everyone to stop in. Kenneth can be reached at (605) 332-6866 or by email: [davsd@midconetwork.com](mailto:davsd@midconetwork.com).



## ND VETERANS ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM

The University of North Dakota's Center for Innovation Foundation and the School of Entrepreneurship at UND has been named the fourth site for the national Veterans Entrepreneur Program (VEP).

The designation comes in partnership with three other top entrepreneurship programs at Oklahoma State, University of Florida and the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. The Foundation is currently accepting application for its 2016 program, which is free of charge to disabled veterans.

On Aug. 22, a pilot program striving to assist veterans in creating and running their own businesses will kick off at the UND Center for Innovation.

"VEP is a rigorous and transformative entrepreneurship program that helps our veterans who have paid such a price for our freedom pursue their dreams of owning a business," said Bruce Gjo-vig, CEO of the Center for Innovation Foundation. "We have raised donations to cover all costs and feature our best entrepreneurship faculty and successful entrepreneurs. For those veterans with a real passion to start or grow a venture, VEP is the boost they need."

VEP will begin with a five-week online course, including online discussions and assessment moderated by entrepreneurship faculty. The veterans involved with the program will develop business concepts and begin preparing for the second phase of the training course.

"VEP Boot Camp is scheduled for Oct. 22-29 in the Center for Innovation's entrepreneur center," said Tyler Okerlund, VEP director. "The boot camp will consist of a week of hands-on learning and face-to-face interaction between the veterans, faculty, guest entrepreneurs and business experts. Nationally ranked entrepreneurship program faculty from around the country will be in attendance to give vets an inside look at how a start-up business really works."

Mentoring and venture development, the third and final phase of VEP, includes eight months of ongoing mentorship and online networking. The phase is designed to give the vets feedback to concerns specific to their ventures.

### **Important date:**

The application deadline is set for July 29. If you or someone you know qualifies for the program and would like to submit an application, please contact the Center for Innovation Foundation at 701.777.3132. If you have any other inquiries, please direct them to Tyler Okerlund at 701.777.6632, or [tyler@innovators.net](mailto:tyler@innovators.net).





## ROUNDS, DONNELLY INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN BILL TO PROTECT VETERANS' CREDIT SCORES

U.S. Sens. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) announced they have introduced bipartisan legislation that would protect the credit ratings of veterans wrongly penalized by delays in reimbursements for medical bills by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In addition to experiencing long wait times and issues making appointments through the Veterans Choice Program, veterans are also getting billed inappropriately for services because the VA has failed to pay health care providers in a timely fashion. These bills, which should be covered by VA benefits, can create financial hardship for veterans and damage their credit scores.

The *Protecting Veterans' Credit Act* would delay for one year medical debt from being reported to credit agencies for veterans who have accessed services through the Veterans Choice Program and other similar VA community care programs. This would allow time for payment issues to be resolved without impacting veterans' credit scores.

"No veteran should have to worry about a lower credit rating and all the costs associated with it because of delays in payment and processing from the VA," said Rounds. "Our legislation makes certain that veterans do not suffer financial hardship – through no fault of their own – when they choose to use a private health provider through the Choice program. Our veterans should be focused on proper treatment and recovery; not whether receiving care will affect their credit rating."

"Hoosier veterans and their credit ratings can be harmed as a result of delays by the VA, which can make it harder to buy a house, rent an apartment, buy a car, or even get a job," said Donnelly. This bipartisan bill would provide relief directly to the men and women who served our country with honor and distinction. They deserve access to quality and timely health care services and the benefits they have earned, without worrying it will lead to financial ruin."

Several advocacy and veterans' advocacy organizations have expressed their support for the legislation including the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the National Patient Advocate Foundation.

"Medical debt wrecks disaster on patients and their families," said Alan Balch, CEO, National Patient Advocate Foundation & Patient Advocate Foundation. "No one deserves to be a casualty of the effects of medical debt, but veterans least of all. The provisions in the Protecting Veterans Credit Act will help defend our veterans from the toxicity of medical debt and its long-term impacts, and ensure they do not suffer a credit loss incurred through no fault of their own when fighting an unpredictable or unforeseen illness. A lowered credit rating or bankruptcy should never be the collateral damage of a veteran seeking medical care."

Congressman John Delaney (MD-06) recently led the introduction of bipartisan companion legislation in the U.S. of House of Representatives.



## SD AIR NATIONAL GUARD ANNOUNCES AIRMEN OF THE YEAR

The South Dakota Air National Guard is pleased to announce its outstanding Airmen of the Year for 2015. Four Airmen from the 114th Fighter Wing were selected as the First Sergeant, Senior Noncommissioned Officer, Noncommissioned Officer and Airman of the Year.

The recipients were chosen based on their leadership, job performance, personal achievements and adherence to the U.S. Air Force core values: integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all we do.

Master Sgt. Justin Rey, of Sioux Falls, was selected as the First Sergeant of the Year. Rey is the first sergeant for the 114th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron and Maintenance Group. He originally joined the National Guard for the education benefits, but has stayed for 20 years because of the patriotic duty and the fellow Airmen serving alongside him. In the civilian sector, Rey works as the director of human resources and senior vice president with Heritage Bank. Rey wants to continue to serve, teach and mentor Airmen within the unit, and said, "Put yourself out there. Do your best every day to perform at a high level and continue to improve."

Master Sgt. Elizabeth Johnson was selected as the Senior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. Johnson grew up in Hartford and is a member of the 114th Medical Group. She was intrigued by the SDANG because she wanted the opportunity to give back to her community. As a civilian, she works as a registered nurse at Prairie States Surgical Center. In the future, Johnson hopes to commission as an officer with the Medical Group.

Technical Sgt. Jared Bowen, of Fordyce, Neb., was selected as the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. He works with the 114th Maintenance Squadron as a quality assurance inspector. Bowen has served with the SDANG for 14 years and joined after 9/11 to serve his country after the attacks. Bowen works as a quality manager for Manitou Americas in Yankton, and said the experience he has gained from the military has provided him with a strong set of personal values and makes him a valuable asset in the civilian sector. In the future, he wants to continue to meet the needs of the maintenance squadron and look for ways to improve the entire organization.

Senior Airmen Amber Spade, of Dell Rapids, was selected as the Airman of the Year. For the past three years, Spade has been a member of the 114th Force Support Squadron. She joined the SDANG after seeing her best friend's accomplishments within the unit.

Spade said she has many family members who have also joined the military and is excited to follow in their footsteps.

The 2015 Airmen of the Year will represent the 114th Fighter Wing as they compete against other Air National Guard members nationwide to determine the overall Air National Guard Airmen of the Year.



Rey



Johnson



Bowen



Spade

## VA SCHEDULES 2 MILLION APPOINTMENTS USING VCP, PROPOSES CONSOLIDATION

Recently the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) authorized its 2 millionth appointment under the Veterans Choice Program (VCP). While that is a milestone for a less than two year program, the VA is ultimately asking that Congress authorize the VA to simplify and streamline the care in the community programs.

VA Secretary Bob McDonald's five MyVA objectives include improving the veteran experience, improving the employee experience so the VA can better serve veterans; and establishing a culture of continuous improvement. In the VA's view the consolidation the community care programs could greatly benefit not only veterans, but also the VA employees and care providers.

However, this consolidation care plan must be enacted by Congressional legislation. The potential positive impacts has been presented by Deputy Secretary Gibson in November 2015 and Secretary McDonald in January 2016.

The plan is available on line at: <http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/resources/myva-initiative/>.

### MyVA Transformation.

Make Veterans *want* to be our customer



myVA

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

2

### MyVA Initiative



## VA ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced partnerships and collaboration with Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation, IBM and Bombas. The three, distinct, relationships are a part of the MyVA Strategic Partnership Initiative, which aims to work together with external organizations to improve the delivery and access of care for veterans. The announcement of the three new partnerships came on the heels of the MyVA Advisory Committee meeting held last week in Boston.

"The strength of MyVA is enhanced by the public-private partnerships we are forming," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "Over the past two years, we have engaged in dozens of new and important partnerships. We are pleased to work with these companies and organizations who have committed their resources to serve the veterans who served our nation."

- The Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation will partner with the VA to identify synergies and facilitate linkages between their respective programs. To date, BMSF has awarded 30 grants totaling over \$15 million to veterans service organizations and academic teaching hospital partners to develop, implement and evaluate innovative models of community-based care and support that improve the mental health and community reintegration outcomes of veterans and their families.



Together, through this new partnership, the two organizations are committed to serving more veterans throughout the continuum of care from community to clinical settings.

- The VA teamed up with IBM Watson Health to increase access to precision medicine for 10,000 VA cancer patients over the next two years. The VA provides care to 3.5 percent of the nation's cancer patients – the largest group of cancer patients in the country. Watson is expected to help VA clinicians give veterans rapid access to precision medicine options, particularly for patients with advanced cancer.



- The VA also announced a collaboration with Bombas.

Bombas was founded two years ago as a give-back sock company, after learning that socks are the #1 most-requested clothing item at homeless shelters. For every pair of socks purchased from the company, it donates a pair of socks, and to date has donated nearly one million pairs. To reach homeless Veterans in New York, Bombas worked with the VA medical centers donating 700 pairs of socks to the NY Harbor and Bronx VA Medical Centers. Bombas and the VA plan to continue their work together throughout the rest of the year and in the future, to expand the reach of the program to other cities and states across the country.



Each of these relationships align with the strategic priorities of mental health, research and homelessness and reflect the VA's commitment to teaming with external organizations and companies to better serve veterans.

Since the launch of MyVA, the VA has entered into new relationships with a number of external organizations to combat issues of homelessness, suicide and veteran unemployment. More information about MyVA may be found at [www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/21806/myva-a-message-from-sec-bob-mcdonald](http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/21806/myva-a-message-from-sec-bob-mcdonald).



# Upcoming Events

- Jul. 22—VABHHCS Open House and Ribbon Cutting for new surgical suites—Fort Meade—11:00 am (MT)  
 Jul. 23-24—Sioux Falls Air Show  
 Aug 4—VABHHCS Hero and Patriot Night—Main Street Square—Rapid City—6:00—9:00 pm (MT)  
 Aug. 7—Purple Heart Memorial Dedication - Capitol Lake—Pierre—1:00 pm (CT)  
 Aug. 7—American Legion Freedom Ride—State Veterans Home—Hot Springs 8:30 am (MT)  
 Aug. 22-25—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota  
 Sep. 1—Veterans Day at the State Fair—Huron - Program at 10:30 at the Freedom Stage  
 Sep. 2—Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Game—Sioux Falls Stadium (1001 North West Avenue) - 6:00 pm (CT)  
 Sep. 3—DAV Brookings Chapter 22 and 727 Transportation Unit Poker Run—Brookings National Guard Armory—10:00 am (CT)  
 Sep. 9—Veterans Stand Down—Wagner Armory  
 Sep. 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—PVA Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)  
 Sep. 16—National POW/MIA Recognition Day Ceremony—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park—6:30 pm (CT)  
 Sep. 23—Veterans Stand Down—VFW—Sioux Falls  
 Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
 Oct. 8—DAV Fall Conference—DAV—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- 2017**
- Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma  
 Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown



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